

## [Botsford]

W14988 Conn. 1938-9 Botsford

"If you're writin' about the mill," says Mr. Botsford, "don't forget to put in somethin' about Marshall Grilley. Marshall was superintendent for a good many years, I don't know just how many, you could find out from any of them in charge. He used to live in that house up on the corner of Skunk Hill—the one with the fence all the way around the grounds.

"Marsh's hobbies were horses and his band. That's where he spent his money. The band especially. There was Grilley's band and the Clock Shop band in the old days, and considerable rivalry between the two of them.

"If a man was a good musician, he could be sure of a job in the mill, and of course the clock shop musicians tried to get new men for their band the same way—givin' them good jobs. It got so they never asked a man his qualifications for the work, but whether he could toot high C on the cornet, or somethin' of that kind.

"Marsh had two sons, one named Myron and one Luther, by different marriages—he was married twice—and he made musicians out of them both. Luther played the piccolo, I remember.

"Grilley's was the oldest band. I forget when 'twas organized, but it was goin' long before the clock shop bunch. So Grilley's always gave a concert on Saturday night. The clock shop band would play on Wednesday night. I ain't enough of a musician to tell you which was best, they both sounded pretty good, and they used to get big crowds. In those days Litchfield and Watertown were noted summer resorts, people from the cities used to come there to spend their vacations. And of course, not bein' much to do, they'd drive to Thomaston of a nice summer evenin' for the concerts. The boys in the two band would

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be braggin' about which had the biggest crowd, but I don't think they was ever much difference. People turned out for one just the same's they did for the other.

"There was a man came to this town from Winsted one time by the name of Peter Henshaw. He was a quiet kind of feller, didn't say much to anyone, and he worked for Bob Innes for a long time before it become known that he could play a trombone. I think 'twas Harold Bidwell found it out, he used to live over on Clay street near Harold, and they was pretty well acquainted. Harold belonged to the clock shop outfit.

"I think 'twas old man Bell was director of the clock shop band, or if he wasn't director, he was playin' with 'em, anyway, and he was in charge of chime clock assembly in those days in the clock shop. That was about the best room in the place to work in, paid about the best money, but the work called for skilled hands.

"Well sir, whoever was responsible for it I don't know, but whether it was Bell or somebody else that got him in there, Henshaw went to work on the chimes. They'd beat Grilley to it, you see, Grilley didn't even know there was a new musician in town until the clock shop outfit begun to play one Wednesday night, and there he was with his trombone. He was pretty good, too, Henshaw was, he used to play solos.

"Of course Grilley was mad! He was madder than a hornet. But that ain't all the story. Seems they couldn't teach Henshaw anything in the clock shop. He wasn't worth a damn on 3 the chimes. They'd beat Grilley to it, you see, Grilley didn't even know there was a new musician in town until the clock shop outfit begun to play one Wednesday night, and there he was with his trombone. He was pretty good, too, Henshaw was, he used to play solos.

"Of course Grilley was mad! He was madder than a hornet. But that ain't all the story. Seems they couldn't teach Henshaw anything in the clock shop. He wasn't work a damn on the chime clock work, and he just couldn't learn. Finally old Aaron got on to it, and he started raisin' hell. Said by God he wasn't runnin' a musicians' home, and he didn't want

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any more such nonsense. So they had to let Henshaw go. But he went over to the mill and Grilley put him to work. I don't suppose he got as much money, but he didn't have no trouble with the work over there, anyway. Most anybody could do some of the work they have over there. And from then on, he played in Grilley's band.

“Old Grilley run that band until he died, and then it broke up, and most of them went with the clock shop outfit. Then they formed the Thomaston Marine band. I think about the only original member still playin' is Harold Bidwell.

“Grilley kept up his music even after he'd retired from the mill. He used to give lessons, and make musucal arrangements for bands and such. His first wife was Liz Hosford, and they had ason—Myron's brother—name was Artie, who got poisoned. He dug up some carrots, or some kind of root, in the garden one spring and ate 'em and they poisoned him and he died.

“Then there was Mr. Kenea. He was in charge of the castin' shop. You'd ought to say somethin' about him. But I don'tknow 4 a great deal about Kenea's early history. He come here from Woodtic, that's part of Wolcott, and he made himself a pile of money, but I don't know enough about him to give you much. I'd rather you'd get it from somebody else.

“I told you once before about that walkin' beam engine they used to have didn't I? Had a big gallery around the inside, and the people used to go over there and walk around that gallery just to see that engine work. Regular steam boat style.

“The mill burned down September first 1856, and they had to build over from the ground up. Know how I remember that date? My father took me up in the cemetery when I was a kig, and he pointed out a gravestone. The date was on it. September first, 1856. He says, ‘If you want to know when the mill burned down, you can always get the date from this gravestone.’

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“ 'twas the grave of a youngster named Devereaux, a kid about six or seven years old. My father was a neighbor of the family and him and Devereaux was settin' up watchin' by that kid's bed when the fire broke out. The kid died the same night my father said.

“And here's somethin' else that probably not many will remember to tell you. There's a ten inch shaft under the floor over there, part of the original machinery, that's runnin' a pair of rolls today. Or it was the last time I talked to Charley Huxford about, it few years ago.”